

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 3, 6 and 9. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 3, 6, and 9.

In the Office action the Examiner alleges that the February 25, 2002 Information Disclosure Statement was not considered in that it fails to comply with 37 CFR §1.97. Specifically the Examiner objects that the listing of the references being submitted was not equivalent to the content of Form PTO-1449. The rules, particularly 37 CFR §1.97, does not require any particular type of listing. However, in order to expedite prosecution of the present application attached herewith is a listing on Form PTO-1449. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 USC §101, as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Amendments were made to claims 3, 6 and 9 to more clearly recite that each of the claims are directed to a statutory class of invention, namely a process (claim 3), machine (claim 6) and an article of manufacture (claim 9). Thus, claims 3, 6, and 9 are each directed to a permissible class of subject matter under 35 USC §101. Therefore, Applicants submit that this rejection with respect to claims 3, 6 and 9 is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 3, 6 and 9 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regards as their invention. Amendments were made claims 3, 6 and 9 to bring them into conformity with the requirements of 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Therefore, Applicants

submit that this rejection with respect to claims 3, 6 and 9 is overcome and should be withdrawn.

The Examiner's cooperation is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' Attorney by telephone should any further indefinite matters be discovered so that appropriate amendments may be made.

The specification was reviewed to uncover the presence of any minor errors grammatical and editorial in nature. Such errors were uncovered by Applicants and a Substitute Specification is now being prepared to correct such errors. The Substitute Specification will be immediately filed upon completion.

Claims 3, 6 and 9 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Noguchi (U.S. Patent No. 5,991,755). This rejection is traversed for the following reasons. Applicants submit that the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in claims 3, 6 and 9 are not taught or suggested by Noguchi whether taken individually or in combination with any of the other references of record. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this rejection with respect to claims 3, 6 and 9.

Amendments were made to claims 3, 6, and 9 to clarify that the present invention is directed to a similar document search method, a similar document search system and a program product for making a computer operate as a similar document search system not taught or suggested by any of the references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other.

Particularly, these claims now more clearly recite that the method, system and computer program implements, in a document search and retrieval system including a memory for storing a document database having documents and information concerning the documents and a processor for processing data of the document database, searching of a document similar to a seeds document from the document database.

The present invention includes first extracting at least one characteristic word from the seeds document including desired retrieval contents; if the at least one characteristic word extracted by the first extracting step is one of a compound characteristic phrase constructed by a plurality of constituent characteristic words included in the compound characteristic phrase, second extracting of characteristic words included in said compound characteristic phrase and each of said plurality of constituent characteristic words of said compound characteristic phrase; calculating, according to the characteristic words extracted by the second extracting step, similarity between the seeds document and the document stored on the document database, by using the characteristic words including the compound characteristic phrase and the constituent characteristic words by which the compound characteristic phrase is constructed; and outputting a retrieval result as a result of the similarity calculated by the similarity calculating step.

Further according to the present invention the similarity calculating step includes the steps of calculating a weighting coefficient corresponding to a distance between said constituent characteristic words on the document stored on the document database, said distance being calculated based on term appearance positions of said constituent characteristic words in a phrase

including said characteristic words extracted in said second extracting step on the document stored on the document database; and calculating similarity involving the weighting coefficient.

Thus as per the features of the present invention as described above, first attention is directed to a compound characteristic phrase of the document. The compound characteristic phrase is constructed by a plurality of constituent characteristic words. If a characteristic word extracted by a first extracting step is one of the words of the compound characteristic phrase, then a second extracting step is conducted to extract characteristic words included in the compound characteristic phrase and each of the constituent characteristic words of the compound characteristic phrase. Further, as per the features of the present invention as described above, the distance used for calculations of weighting coefficients represents a distance between the constituent characteristic words of the compound characteristic phrase in the document to be retrieved.

The above described features of the present invention are not taught or suggested by any of the references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other. Particularly, the above described features of the present invention are not taught or suggested by Noguchi.

Noguchi teaches, for example, at col. 12, lines 31-33 that a weighting factor is set based on the occurrence frequencies of retrieval words. In Noguchi, the distance represents a distance between a characteristic vector of seeds document and a characteristic vector of a document to be retrieved in a characteristic vector space. Thus, there is no teaching or suggestion in Noguchi that the distance being used is a distance between the constituent

characteristic words of the compound characteristic phrase in the document to be retrieved and that this distance is used for calculations of weighting coefficients corresponding to the distance.

Therefore, Noguchi clearly does not teach or suggest that a calculation is performed to generate weighting coefficients corresponding to the distance between the constituent characteristic words of the compound characteristic phrase in the document to be retrieved as in the present invention as recited in the claims. Further, at no point in Noguchi is there any teaching or suggestion that the weighting factor taught therein corresponds to a distance calculated between term appearance positions on the seeds document as is clearly recited in the claims. The weighting factors taught by Noguchi are simply intended to provide weighting of the frequency of occurrence of a retrieval word in the document.

Thus, similarity as calculated according to the present invention as recited in the claims is quite different from that of Noguchi in that in the present invention the distances between the terms is used to develop weighting coefficients so that, for example, terms having positions within the document that are closer together may have a higher weighting coefficient relative to terms having positions within the document that are farther apart. Such is clearly not taught or suggested by Noguchi since the weighting factors in Noguchi are simply to provide a higher weighting factor to terms that appear more often relative to terms that appear less often.

Thus, Noguchi fails to teach or suggest that if the at least one characteristic word extracted by the first extracting step is one of a compound characteristic phrase constructed by a plurality of constituent characteristic

words included in the compound characteristic phrase, second extracting of characteristic words included in said compound characteristic phrase and each of said plurality of constituent characteristic words of said compound characteristic phrase as recited in the claims.

Further, Noguchi fails to teach or suggest calculating a weighting coefficient corresponding to a distance between said constituent characteristic words on the document stored on the document database, said distance being calculated based on term appearance positions of said constituent characteristic words in a phrase including said characteristic words extracted in said second extracting step on the document stored on the document database as recited in the claims.

Therefore, as is quite clear from the above, the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by Noguchi whether taken individually or in combination with any of the other references of record and as such does not anticipate nor render obvious the features of the present invention as recited in the claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC §102(b) rejection of claims 3, 6 and 9 as being anticipated by Noguchi is respectfully requested.

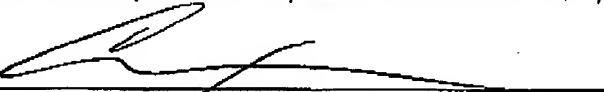
The remaining references of record have been studied. Applicants submit that they do not supply any of the deficiencies noted above with respect to the reference utilized in the rejection of claims 1-9.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claims 3, 6, and 9 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 3, 6 and 9 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (500.41226X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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